

CIA HISTORICAL REVIEW PROGRAM
RELEASE AS SANITIZED

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Done

29 May 1954

2003

MEMORANDUM FOR: The Honorable Henry F. Holland
Assistant Secretary of State
State Department
Washington, D. C.

VIA: Mr. Raymond G. Leddy
Officer in Charge Central America and
Panama Affairs
State Department

SUBJECT: Attitude of President Osorio of El Salvador
toward General Ydigoras Fuentes.

1. It is requested that you give us your considered advice with regard to the following problem which is vexing us at the present time.

2. We are, of course, entirely mindful of the decision arrived at several weeks ago to the effect that Ambassador McDermott would not be used or requested to take any action with respect to Calligeris and his movement. More specifically, it was decided that Ambassador McDermott would not act as an intermediary for or spokesman on behalf of Calligeris, or introduce any representative of Calligeris to President Osorio or any other officials of the Salvadoran Government. However, it is not believed that the proposal set forth below for your consideration would amount to a contravention of this decision.

3. For a long time [] in El Salvador has been reporting that President Osorio looks with considerable favor upon General Ydigoras Fuentes and his movement. At the very least he has given Fuentes house-room in El Salvador and does not appear to have harassed him. [In fact we have a number of reports to the effect that Osorio's friendship for Fuentes and Fuentes' influence upon Osorio may well have been one of the reasons for Osorio's coolness toward Calligeris and his unwillingness to receive the retired general officer who sought to approach Osorio on behalf of Calligeris.] It has never been clear, however, whether Osorio has provided or has been willing to provide tangible assistance and support to Fuentes and his movement.

4. During the past ten days or so we have received numerous indications of Fuentes' rising concern and agitation about the way things are going, and of his attempts to obtain support for himself from whatever source he can get it. A man by the name of Lanuza visited Washington recently representing himself as an emissary of Fuentes and seeking

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to obtain a hearing from US authorities including CIA. I believe you know about this approach and of the fact that Lanuza was turned away without being given any satisfaction whatsoever.

5. We received yesterday from [] in El Salvador a report to the effect that Fuentes has represented that he received on 25 May an offer of considerable assistance from Osorio.. Fuentes alleged that the [] purporting to represent [] told Fuentes the following:

a. El Salvador is willing to sign a military assistance pact with the United States.

b. Osorio will provide full support to Fuentes, but only for an internal Guatemalan movement.

c. Osorio was given a list of Salvadoran smugglers to help Fuentes in border crossings.

d. Osorio is not in favor of any outside movement (presumably Calligeris) passing arms or men through El Salvador.

6. It is obviously most important for us to know whether Fuentes is telling the truth or whether this is nothing more than a series of unfounded allegations cooked up by Fuentes for the purpose of obtaining backing from the United States. We are attempting to check on this question indirectly [] but we do not believe that such checking will produce the most dependable and satisfactory results.

7. In our effort to hit upon a better means of checking, the following thought occurred to us:

By a message sent to Ambassador McDermott, [] authorized by State Department, inform Ambassador McDermott of the substance of this latest claim on the part of Fuentes and instruct him to find an early opportunity to speak with [] about some subject -- perhaps military assistance to El Salvador or about the menace of Guatemala to the security of El Salvador. Then, somewhere along in the conversation, have Ambassador McDermott inquire [] in a casual way about Fuentes, asking [] opinion of Fuentes and his evaluation of Fuentes' "well publicized claims of ability to do something about the situation in Guatemala." Ambassador McDermott might also

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refer to the fact that he has heard from Washington that Fuentes has sent representatives there soliciting support for his movement. Ambassador McDermott would be instructed to say nothing whatever about Calligeris, and if [] should ask questions or make comments about Calligeris, the Ambassador would say only that he had, of course, heard a great deal about Calligeris -- and nothing more.

8. It seems to us that this would not be an unnatural or artificial subject for discussion between McDermott and [] If [] is genuinely backing Fuentes, and being on notice of the grave concern of our Government about the situation in Guatemala, he might well say something which would serve to confirm or reject the claims of Fuentes -- having been given the suggested opening. Finally -- as stated above -- it does not seem to us that this proposal would run counter to the decision not to employ Ambassador McDermott in connection with obtaining [] support for Calligeris.

[]

FRANK G. WISNER
Deputy Director (Plans)

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